



No. 252

KARTTIKEYA



C.M. Vitankar

ADOPTED FROM THE SKANDA-PURANA-SAMHITA



Karttikeya, the commander-in-chief of the celestial army, is also known as Subrahmanya, Skanda, Guha and Kumara. In the southern states of India, Subrahmanya is a popular deity even today. Among the Tamil-speaking people he is better known as Murukan or Murugan. In the North, he is largely unknown; but he is worshipped in the East, especially in Bengal, where women pray to him for worthy sons. Like Ganesha, he too is a son of Shiva and Parvati, miraculously born. If Ganesha was created by Parvati, Karttikeya was the creation of Shiva, nurtured by Agni, Ganga and Kritikas in turn.

Six-headed, twelve-armed and seated on his vahana or vehicle, the peacock, Karttikeya is the symbol of youth, beauty and valour. In the South he also symbolises the supreme wisdom since, according to legend, he taught his father, thereby earning the name of Svaminatha.

Karttikeya though usually depicted as a bachelor is also mentioned as having two wives: Valli and Devasena.

The story of Karttikeya is found in the Mahabharata, in the Shiva, Skanda and Brahmanda puranas, and in the Ramayana. Our story is based on the Tamil version of the Skanda-Purana-Samhita.

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KARTTIKEYA



IN ANCIENT TIMES, THE DEVAS AND THE ASURAS WERE FOREVER AT WAR AND OFTEN IT WAS THE ASURAS WHO WERE DEFEATED.

AFTER ONE CRUSHING DEFEAT, AN ASURA KING NAMED AKHIRSEN WENT TO HIS DAUGHTER, MAYA, A SORCERESS.

THE DEVAS
ARE VICTORIOUS AGAIN.
O THE SHAME
OF IT!

DON'T WORRY,
FATHER, I WILL NOT REST
TILL I TEACH THE DEVAS
A LESSON!



TAKING THE FORM OF A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN MAYA WENT TO THE FOREST WHERE THE GREAT SAGE KASHYAPA SAT DEEP IN MEDITATION.

I WILL MARRY
THIS SAGE AND BRING
FORTH CHILDREN MORE
POWERFUL THAN
THE DEVAS.



HER MAGIC CHANGED
THE PLACE INTO
A PRETTY GARDEN
WHERE SHE DANCED
AND SANG MELODIOUSLY...



...TILL THE SAGE
LOOKED UP.

PLEASE LET ME SERVE
YOU AS YOUR WIFE,
O HOLY ONE.



HOW CAN
I REFUSE YOU,
NOBLE MAIDEN!

SAGE KASHYAPA AND THE ASURA
PRINCESS LIVED HAPPILY IN THE
FOREST. IN DUE COURSE A SON WAS
BORN TO THEM.



YOU, MY MIGHTY
SURAPADMAN, SHALL
BE THE LORD OF THE
THREE WORLDS.

LATER MAYA GAVE BIRTH TO TWO MORE SONS WHOM SHE NAMED SIMHAMUKHA
AND TARAKA.

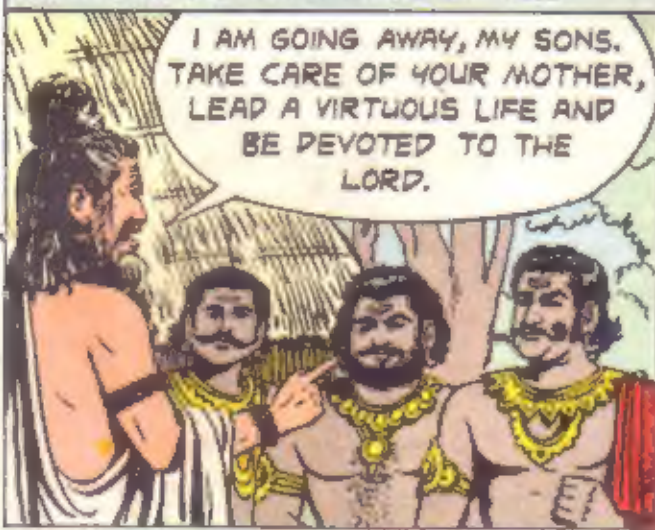


I CAN'T WAIT FOR THE
DAY WHEN YOU WILL
CONQUER THE DEVAS
AND MAKE THEM
OUR SLAVES.

THE VIRTUOUS SAGE OF COURSE
WAS IGNORANT OF MAYA'S DESIGNS.

SO WHEN THE BOYS CAME OF AGE —

I AM GOING AWAY, MY SONS. TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOTHER, LEAD A VIRTUOUS LIFE AND BE DEVOTED TO THE LORD.

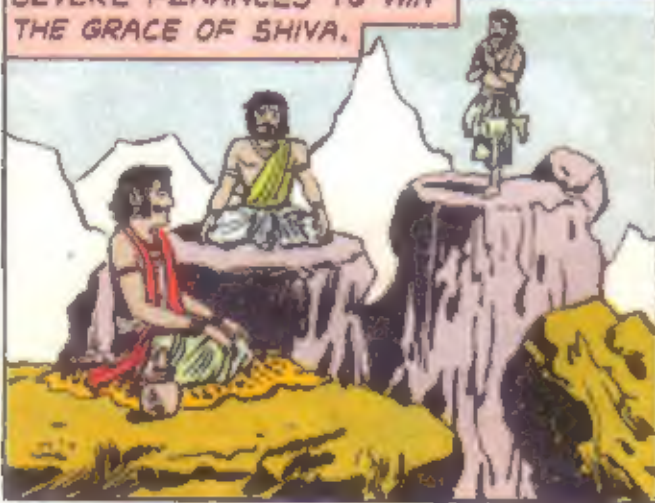


NOW IS THE TIME TO ACT. PROPITIATE LORD SHIVA AND OBTAIN BOONS WHICH WILL MAKE YOU INVINCIBLE.

AS YOU WISH, MOTHER.



THE THREE LEFT HOME AND PERFORMED SEVERE PENANCES TO WIN THE GRACE OF SHIVA.



BUT THEIR EFFORTS DID NOT BEAR FRUIT. SO SURAPADMAN, THE ELDEST, JUMPED INTO THE SACRIFICIAL FIRE.



BUT THE NEXT MOMENT HE WAS SAVED FROM ITS FLAMES BY SHIVA HIMSELF.

WHY ARE YOU SACRIFICING YOURSELF?



LORD, I WANT TO BE THE MASTER OF THE UNIVERSE. I WANT TO HAVE A BODY THAT WILL NOT PERISH.



INTOXICATED WITH TRIUMPH, THE THREE BROTHERS RETURNED HOME AND TOLD THEIR MOTHER ABOUT SHIVA'S BOON.



THEN, RAVAGING KINGDOM AFTER KINGDOM ON THEIR ROUTE...



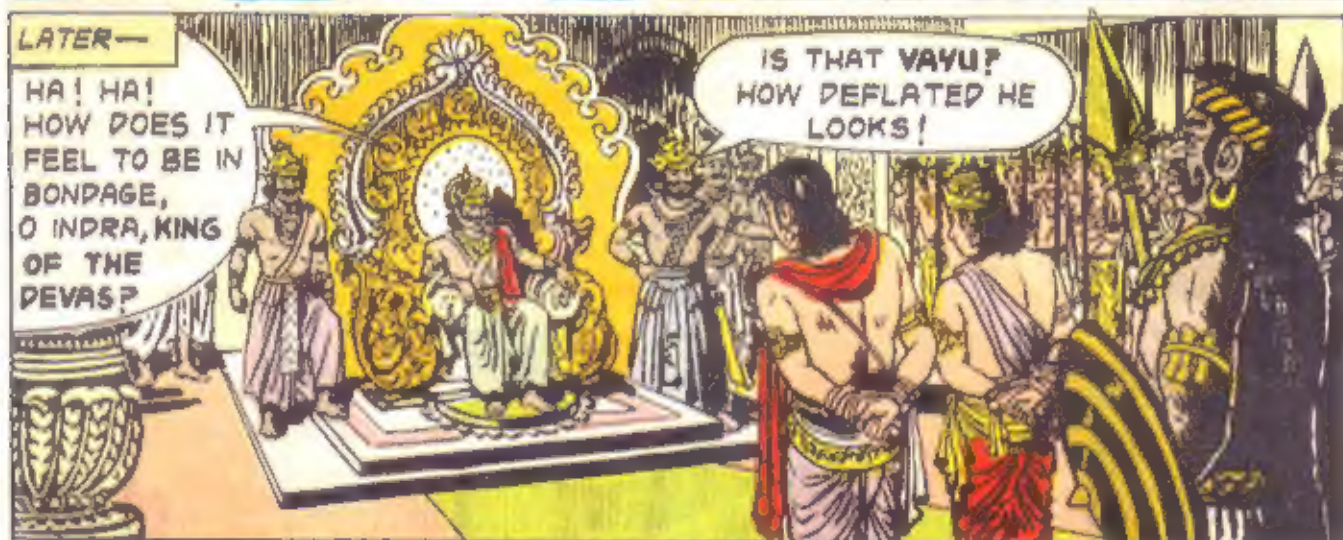
...THEY CAME TO DEVALOKA. THERE, IN THE FIERCE BATTLE THAT FOLLOWED, THE DEVAS WERE ROUTED...



...AND TAKEN CAPTIVE.

LATER—

HA! HA!
HOW DOES IT
FEEL TO BE IN
BONDAGE,
O INDRA, KING
OF THE
DEVAS?



IS THAT VAYU?
HOW DEFLATED HE
LOOKS!

WHAT SHOULD WE
DO WITH THEM,
BROTHER?



WE'LL MAKE
THEM OUR SLAVES.
INDRA WILL BE OUR
FISHERMAN, AND
VAYU OUR SWEEPER,
AND...

...SURYA WILL MAKE
A FINE BALL FOR OUR
CHILDREN.



A BRILLIANT IDEA!
HAHAHA!

SURAPADMAN HAD A MAGNIFICENT CITY BUILT BY VISHWAKARMA, THE ARCHITECT OF THE DEVAS. HE CALLED IT MAHENDRAPURI AND MADE IT HIS CAPITAL.



THE DEVAS MEANWHILE WERE LAMENTING THEIR FATE.

THEY HAVE IMPRISONED
EVEN THE VALIANT
JAYANTA*! WHAT
SHALL WE DO?

HOW
LONG CAN
WE SUFFER THIS
HUMILIATION?



SHIVA
HAD PROMISED
TO HELP US.

THAT
WAS LONG
AGO.



LET'S GO TO KAILAS
ONCE MORE AND
PRAY TO HIM.

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN
WHAT HAPPENED TO
KAMA WHEN WE LAST
VISITED KAILAS?

KAMA, THE GOD OF LOVE, HAD BEEN BURNT TO ASHES WHEN HE HAD TRIED TO
DISTURB SHIVA'S PENANCE. LATER, HOWEVER, HE WAS RESTORED TO LIFE.

SHIVA, HAPPILY
MARRIED TO PARVATI
NOW, IS MORE
COMPASSIONATE AND
WILL SURELY LISTEN
TO OUR PRAYER.

YES. LET'S GO TO KAILAS
ONCE MORE.

AT KAILAS —

LORD, DRUNK WITH
POWER THE MEAN ASURAS
HAVE MADE US THEIR
SLAVES. MY SON, JAYANTA
IS THEIR PRISONER!

BE PATIENT!
YOUR MISERIES
WILL SOON END
BECAUSE THEIR
DAYS ARE
NUMBERED.

THEN SHIVA ASSUMED A FORM WITH SIX FACES...



...FROM WHICH SIX DIVINE SPARKS SHOT FORTH...



...DAZZLING THE DEVAS WITH THEIR SPLENDOUR.



THE CHILD BORN OUT OF THESE SPARKS WILL SLAY THE ASURAS.



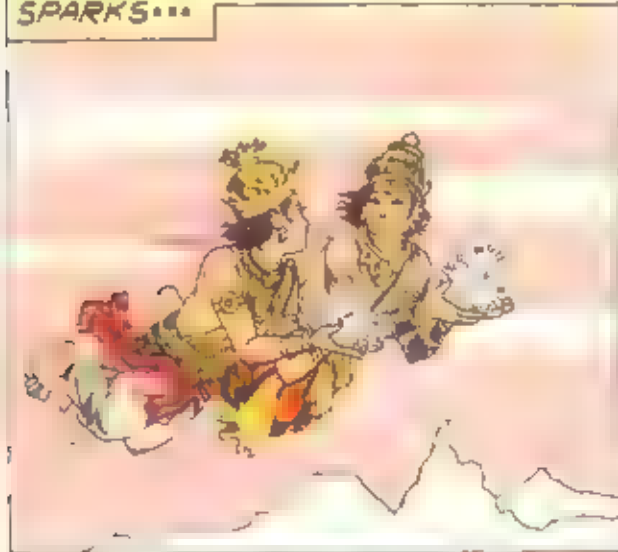
SHIVA THEN ASSUMED HIS ORIGINAL FORM.



VAYU, YOU AND AGNI CARRY THESE SPARKS TO GANGA. SHE'LL CARRY THEM TO THE SHARAVANA* ON THE UDAYA MOUNTAIN.

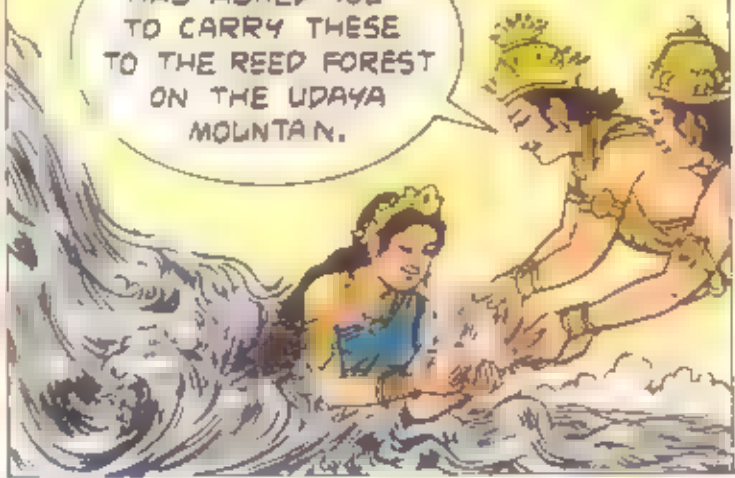
*FOREST OF REEDS

AGNI AND VAYU FLEW WITH THE SPARKS...

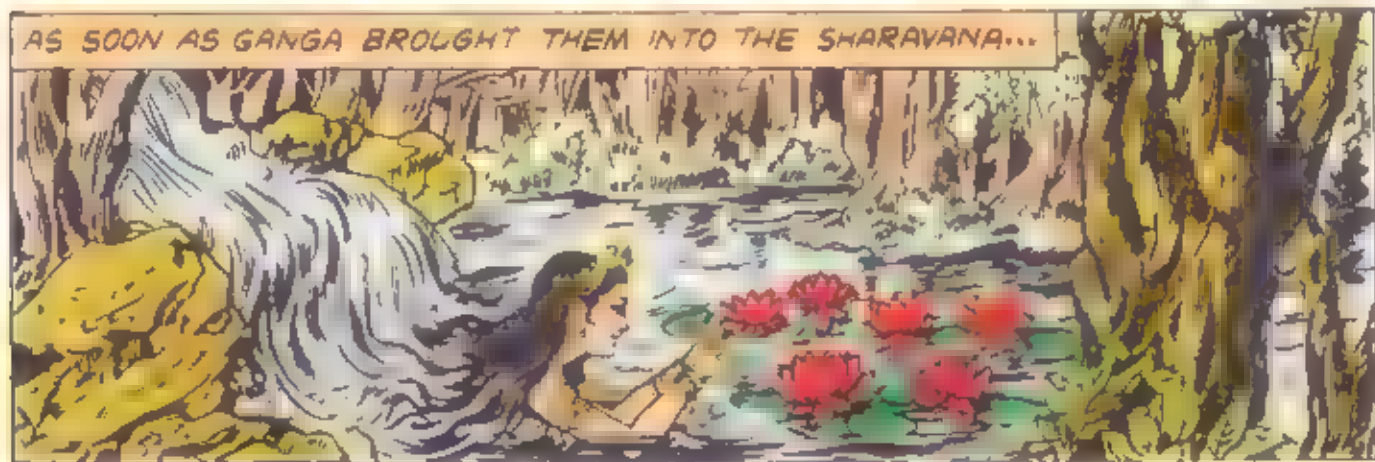


... TO GANGA.

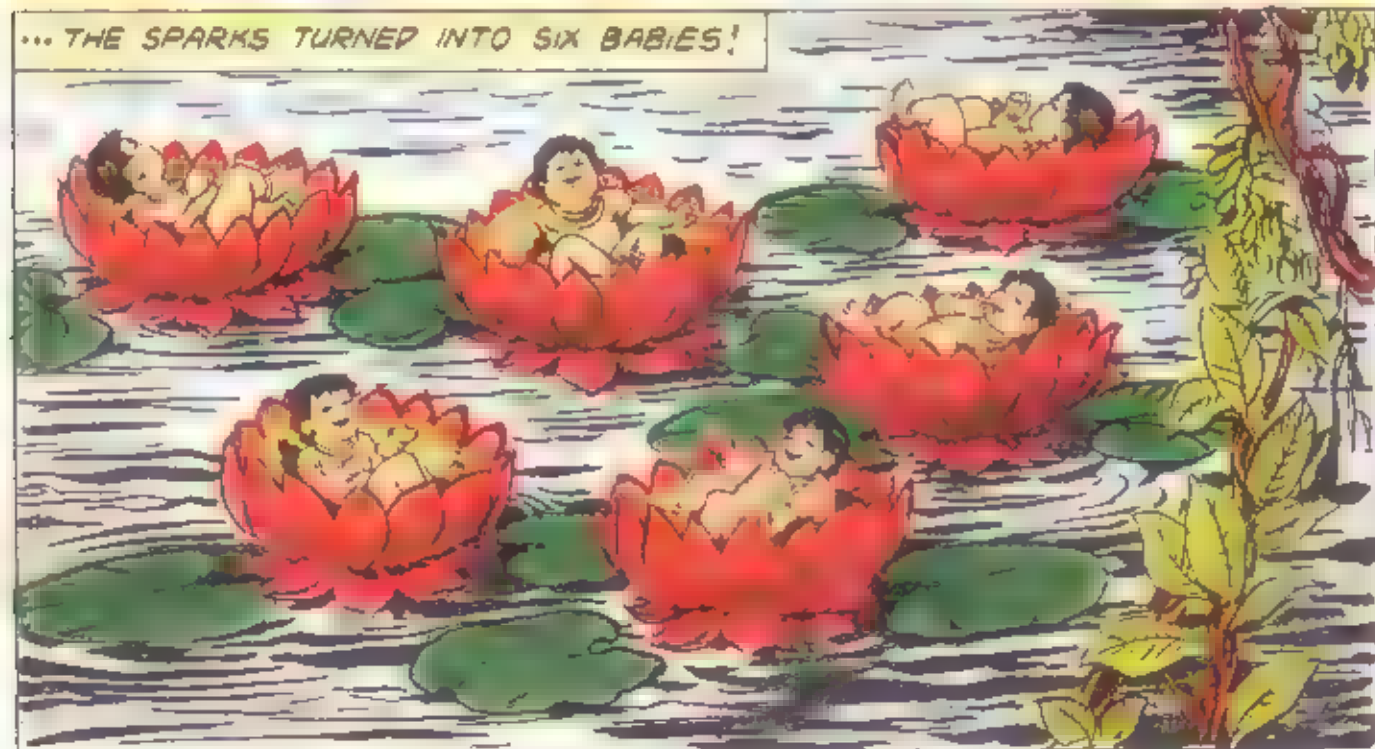
SHIVA
HAS ASKED YOU
TO CARRY THESE
TO THE REED FOREST
ON THE UDAYA
MOUNTAIN.



AS SOON AS GANGA BROUGHT THEM INTO THE SHARAVANA...



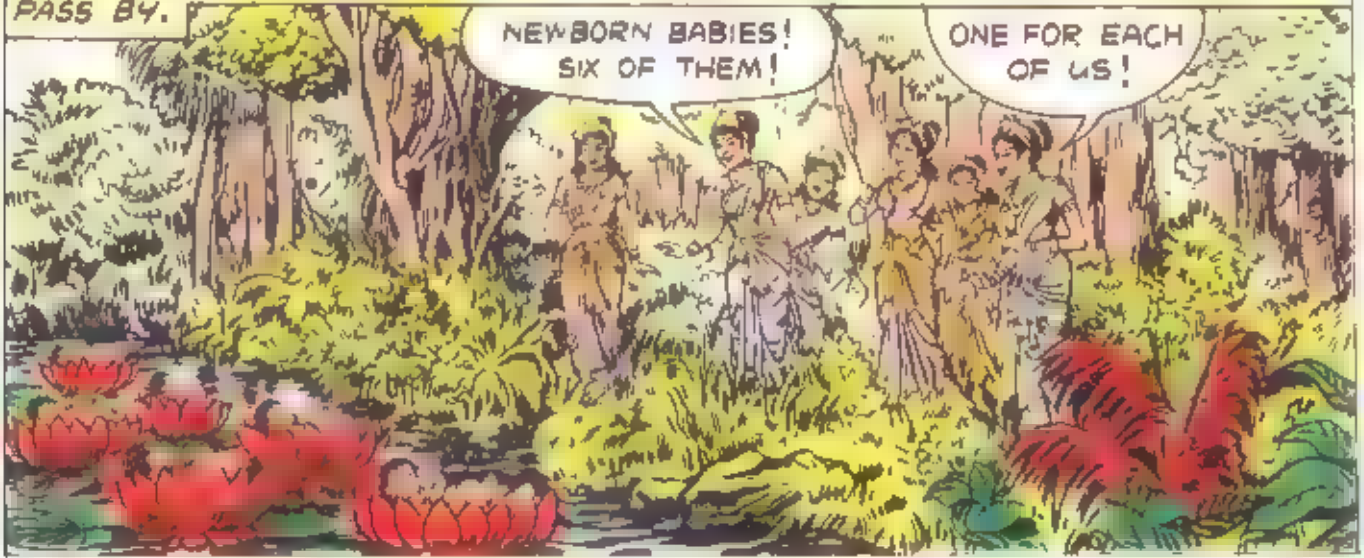
... THE SPARKS TURNED INTO SIX BABIES!



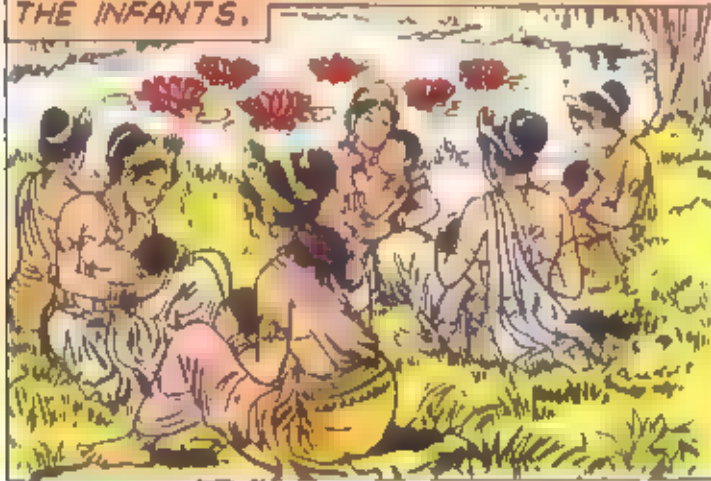
JUST THEN SIX CELESTIAL NYMPHS CALLED THE KRITTIKAS HAPPENED TO PASS BY.

NEWBORN BABIES!
SIX OF THEM!

ONE FOR EACH
OF US!



AND THE KRITTIKAS BEGAN TO CUDDLE
THE INFANTS.



THE DEVAS CAME ON THE SCENE
A LITTLE LATER.

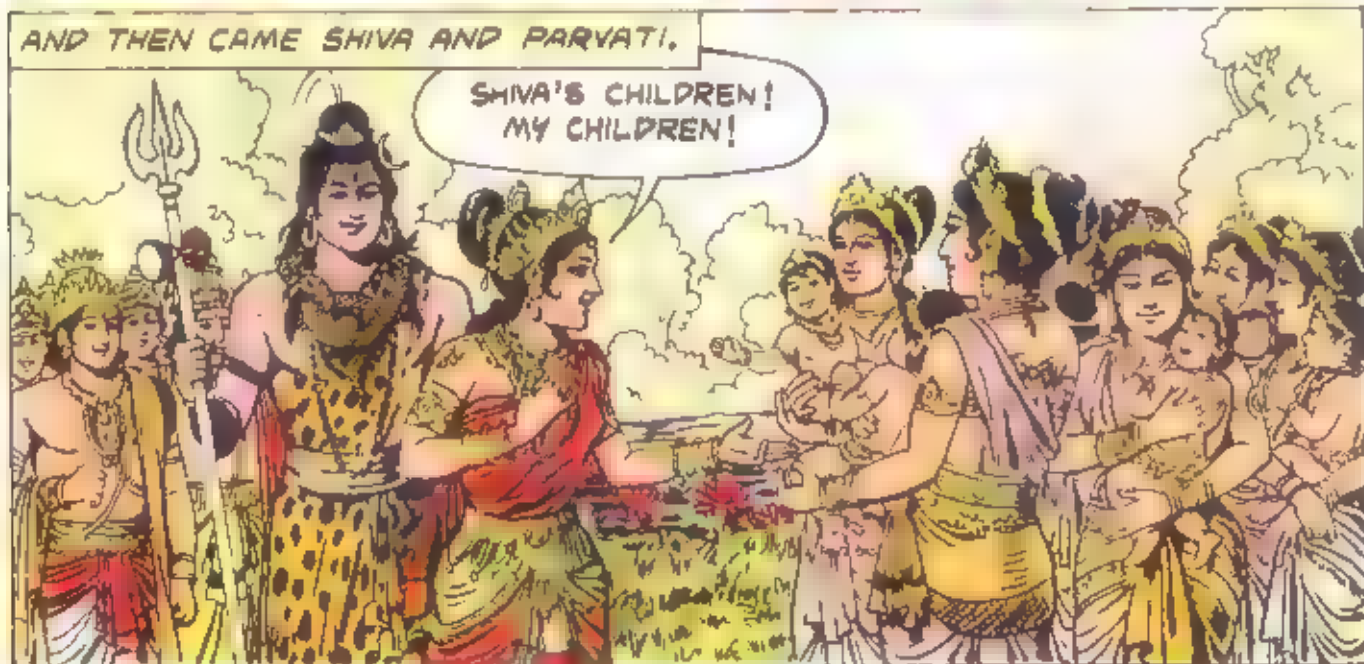
LOOK! THE
CHILD...

YOU MEAN
CHILDREN!

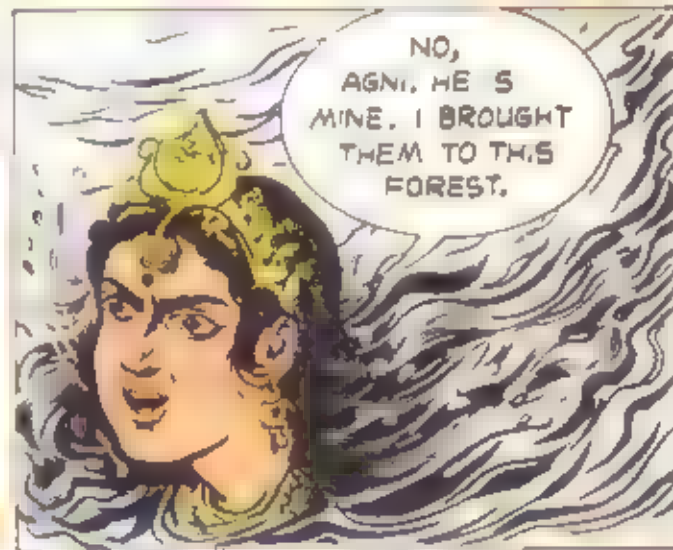
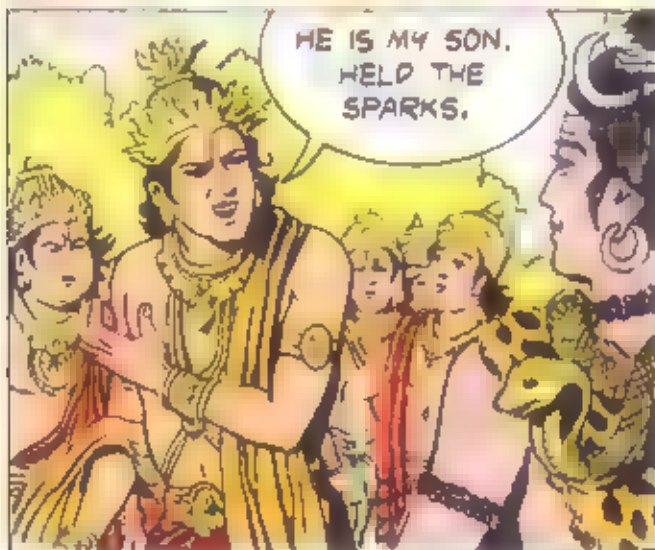
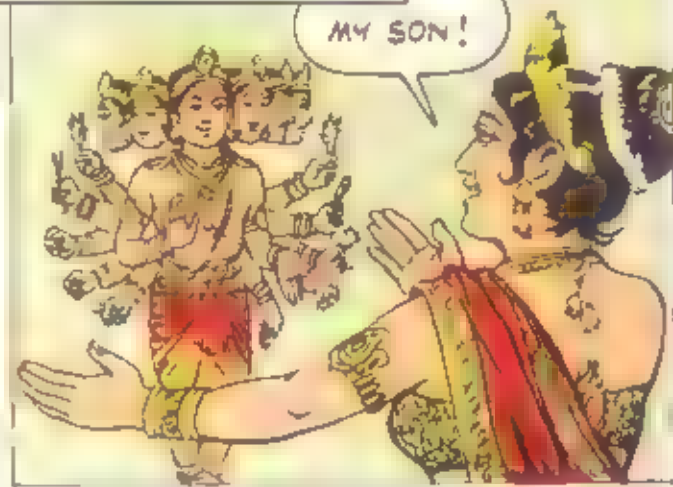


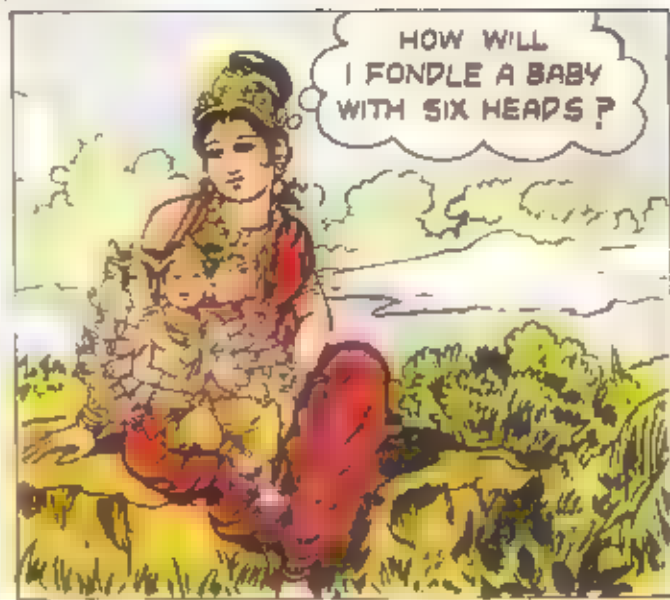
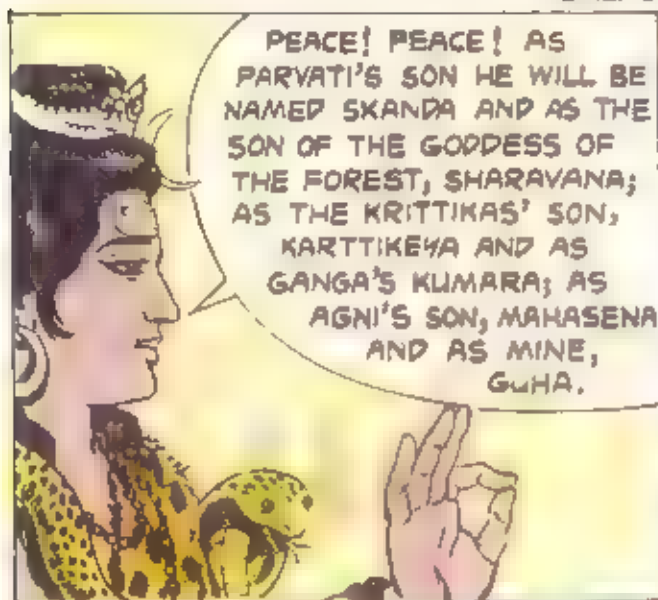
AND THEN CAME SHIVA AND PARVATI.

SHIVA'S CHILDREN!
MY CHILDREN!



AS PARVATI STEPPED CLOSER, THE BABIES MERGED INTO ONE.





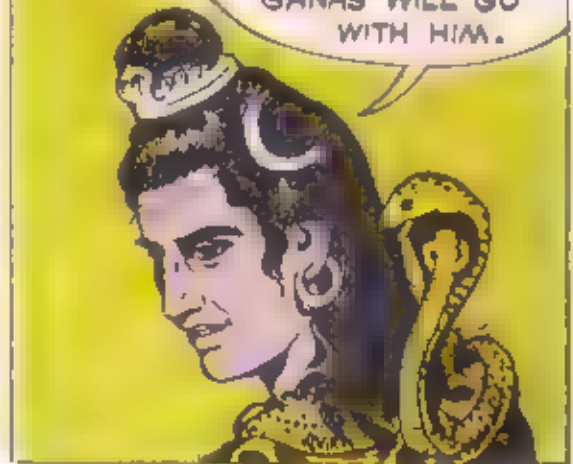
ONE DAY AT KAILASA—

PARVATI, THE TIME HAS COME FOR KARTTIKEYA TO SUBDUCE TARAKASURA, SIMHAMUKHA, AND SURAPADMAN.

BUT HE IS JUST A CHILD, MY LORD, AND THEY ARE MIGHTY WARRIORS.

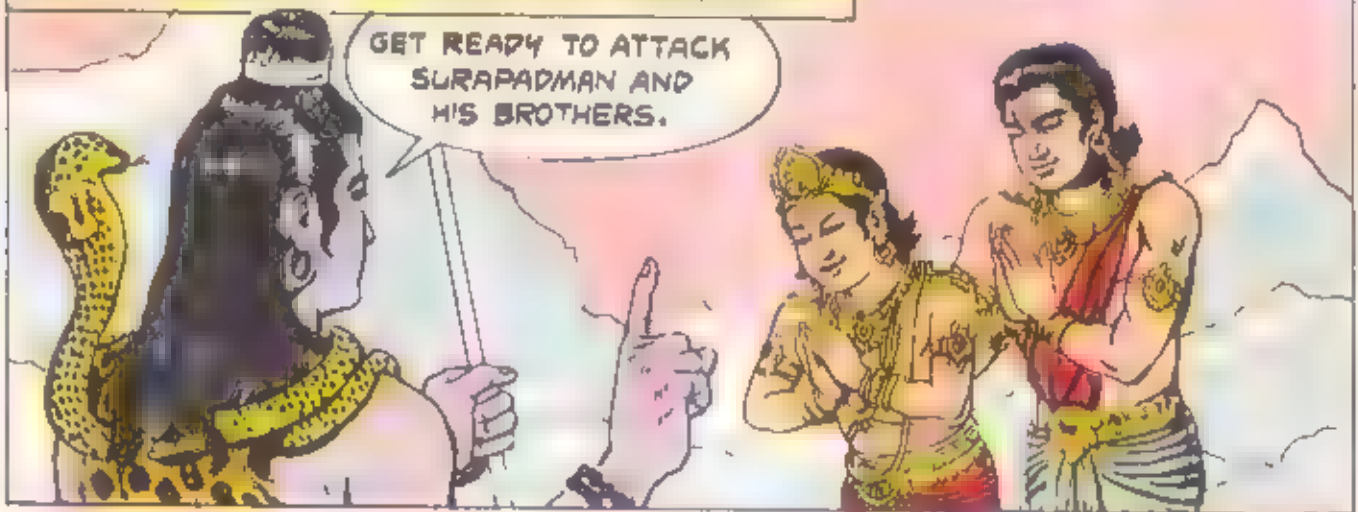


YES, BUT HE IS THE CHILD WITH THE DIVINE SPARK. BESIDES, HIS GANAS WILL GO WITH HIM.



SHIVA SUMMONED KARTTIKEYA AND VEERABAHU.

GET READY TO ATTACK SURAPADMAN AND HIS BROTHERS.

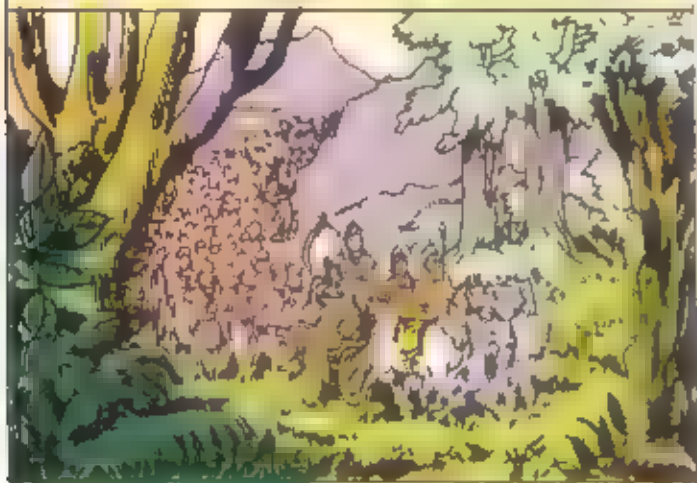


WHEN THE PREPARATIONS WERE COMPLETED—

YOU SHALL LEAD THE DEVAS TO VICTORY. CRUSH THE ASURAS AND LIBERATE THE DEVAS. HERE'S THE MATCHLESS VEL, YOUR SPEAR. MAY SUCCESS BE YOURS!

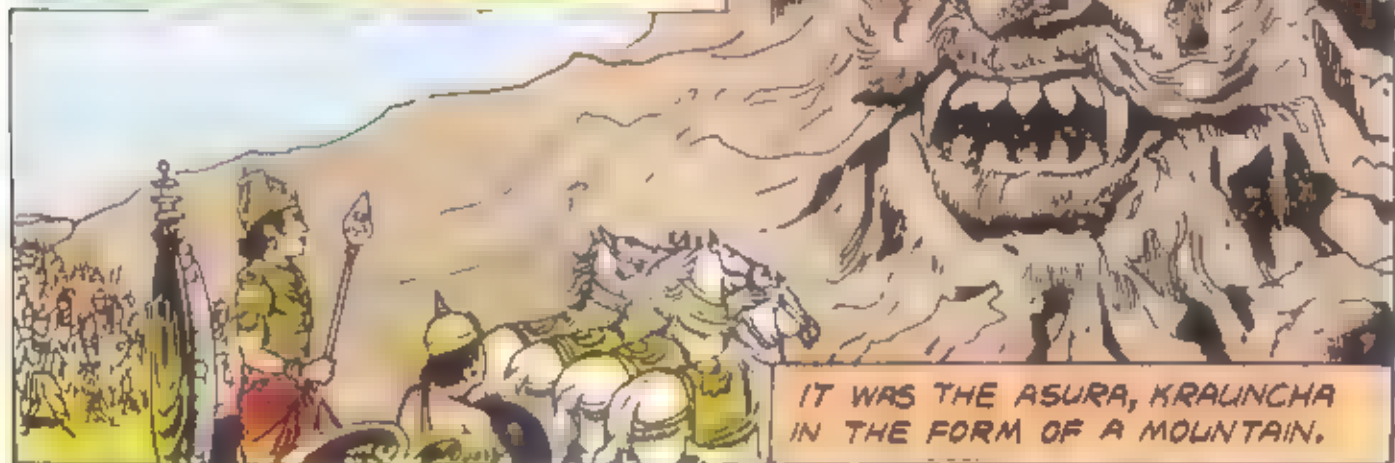


ARMED WITH THE SPEAR, KARTTIKEYA
SET OUT IN PURSUIT OF THE ASURAS.



AFTER HE HAD COVERED
SOME DISTANCE —

YOU WILL HAVE TO
FACE ME, YOUNG BOY,
BEFORE YOU PROCEED
FURTHER.

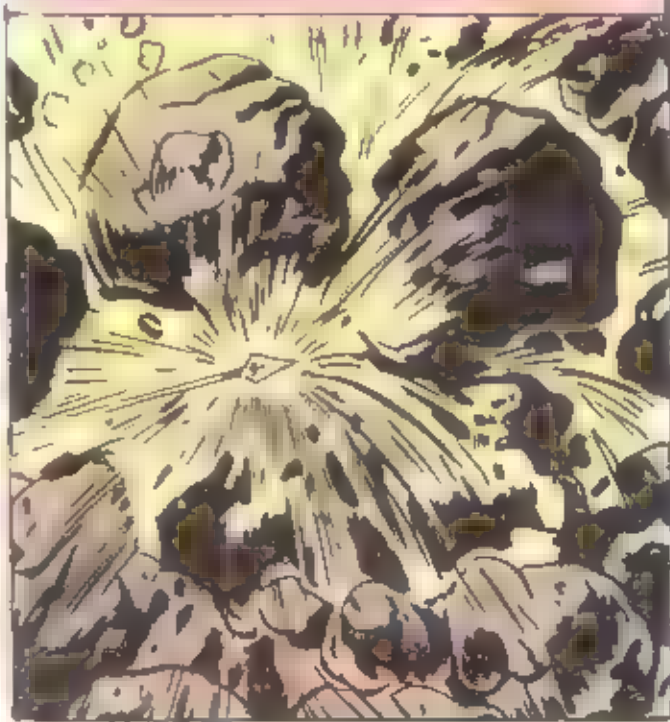


IT WAS THE ASURA, KRAUNCHA
IN THE FORM OF A MOUNTAIN.

WITHOUT A WORD, KARTTIKEYA
HURLED HIS SPEAR...



...AND KRAUNCHA WAS NO MORE.



WHEN THE NEWS REACHED TARAKA—

KRAUNCHA DESTROYED?
BY A SLIP OF
A BOY?



WELL, WELL, LET
ME GO AND
SIZE HIM
UP.



WHEN HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH KARTTIKEYA—

DON'T MISUSE THE
WEAPONS GRANTED
TO YOU. RELEASE
THE DEVAS, YOU
AND YOUR
BROTHERS WILL
BE FORGIVEN.



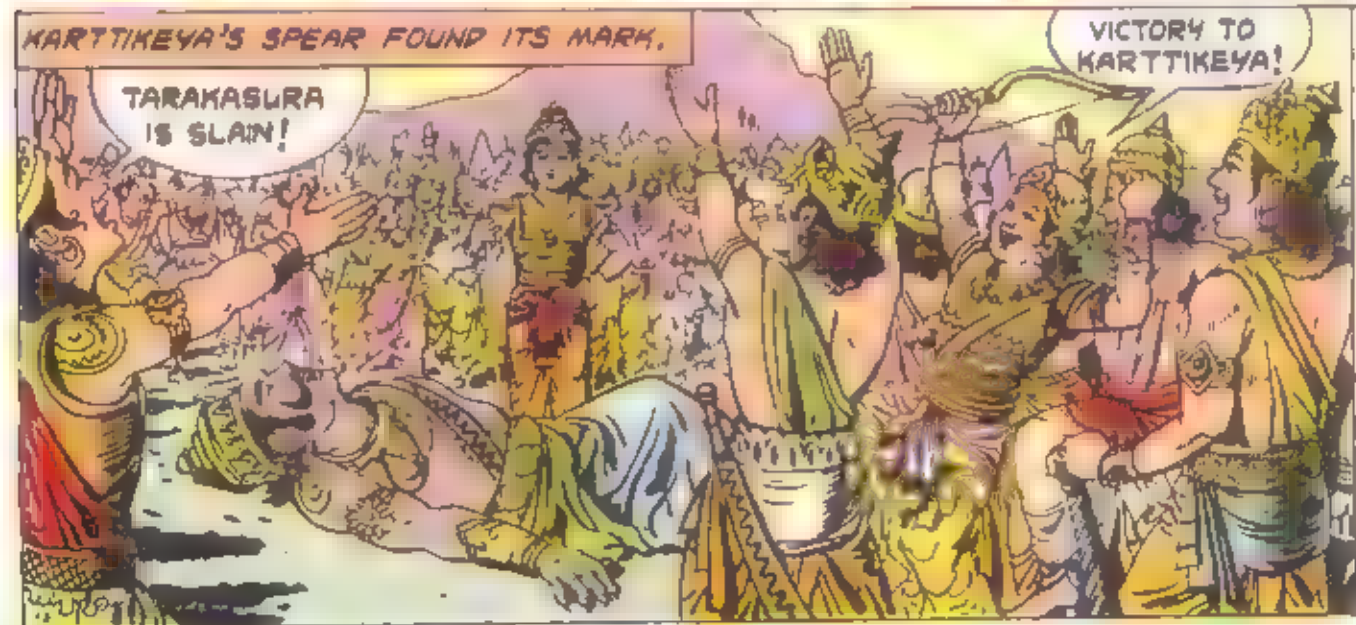
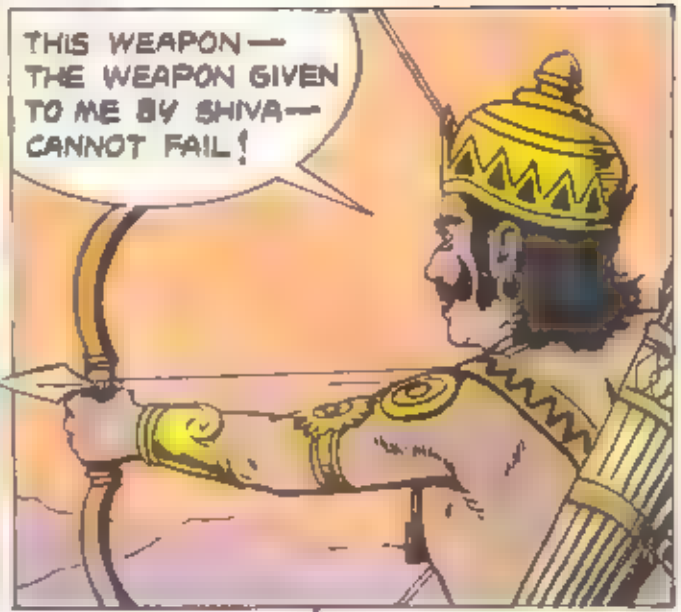
HOW DARE
YOU, YOU IMPUDENT
BOY! GET
AWAY...

...BEFORE I KILL
YOU!



VICTORY TO
SHIVA!





LATER—

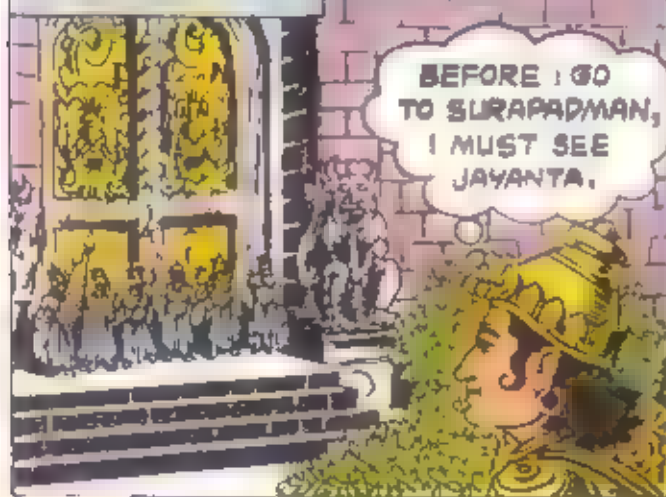
VEERABAHU,
TARAKASURA'S DEATH MAY
HAVE BROUGHT HIS BROTHERS
TO THEIR SENSES. GO AS MY
ENVOY TO SURAPADMAN
AND ASK HIM TO STOP
PERSECUTING THE
DEVAS.

AS YOU
COMMAND,
MY LORD.

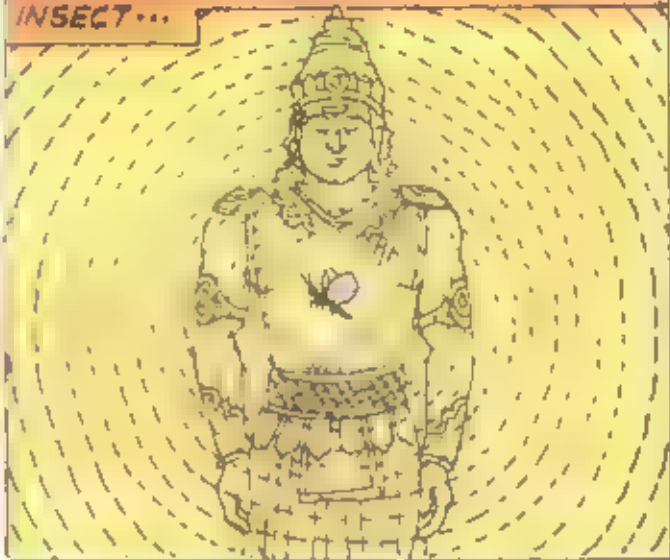


WHEN VEERABAHU REACHED
SURAPADMAN'S CAPITAL,
MAHENDRAPURI—

BEFORE I GO
TO SURAPADMAN,
I MUST SEE
JAYANTA.



HE CHANGED HIMSELF INTO A TINY
INSECT...

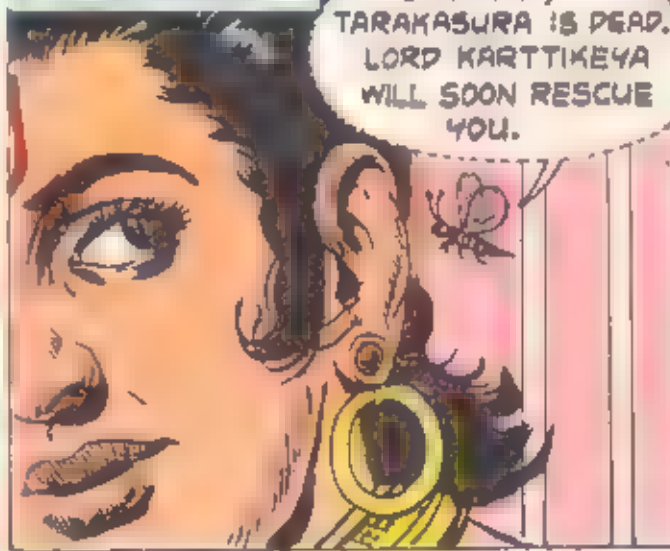


...AND FLEW INTO THE CITY.

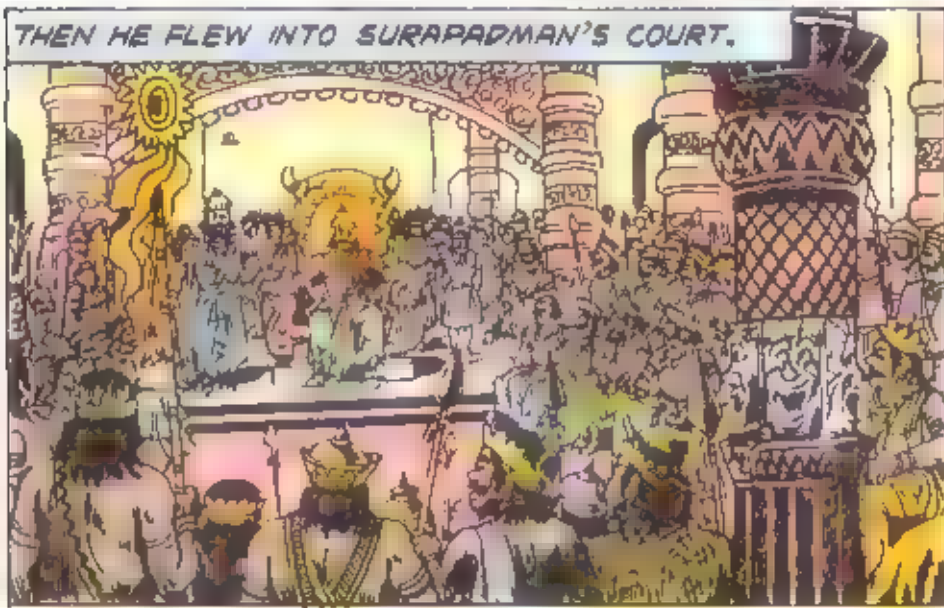


IN THE PRISON—

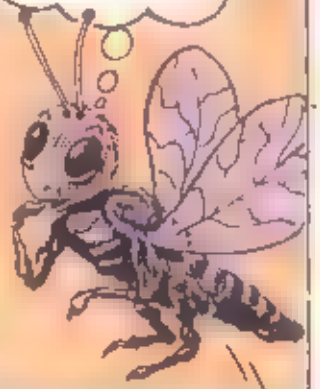
JAYANTA,
TARAKASURA IS DEAD.
LORD KARTTIKEYA
WILL SOON RESCUE
YOU.



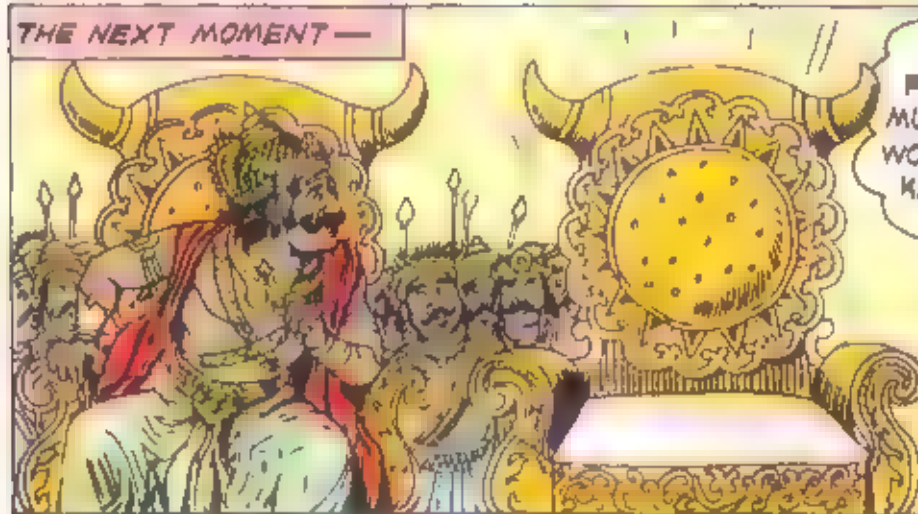
THEN HE FLEW INTO SURAPADMAN'S COURT.



I WILL ASSUME
MY OWN FORM NOW.
WILL SURAPADMAN
OFFER ME
A SEAT?



THE NEXT MOMENT —



A THRONE
FOR ME! IT
MUST BE THE
WORK OF LORD
KARTTIKEYA!

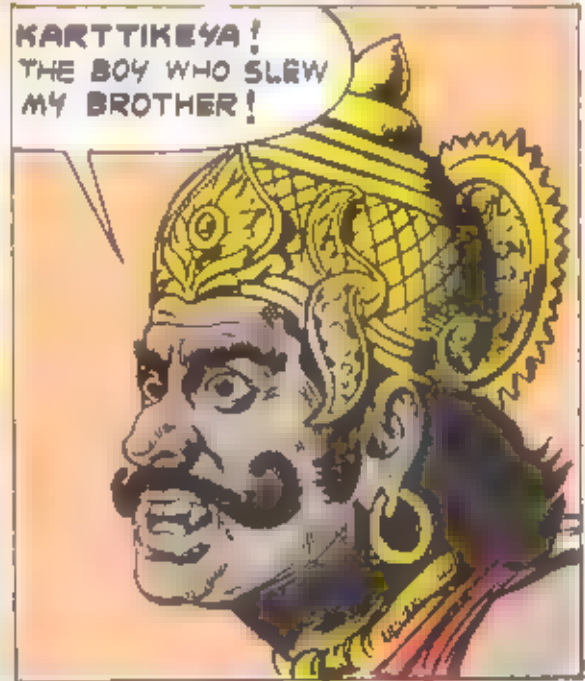


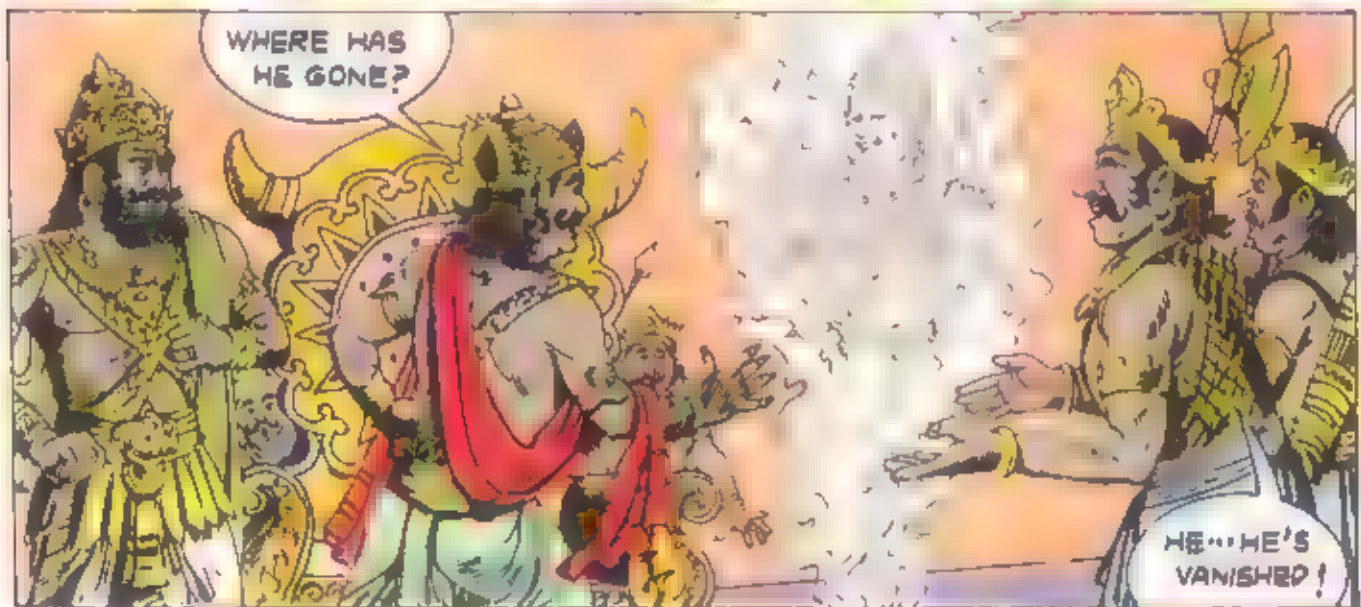
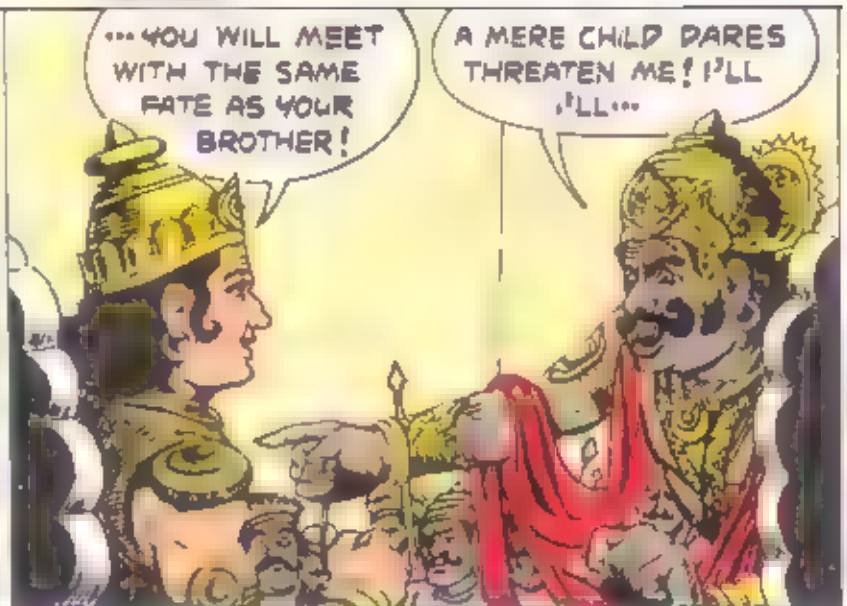
WHO...
WHO ARE
YOU?

I AM LORD
KARTTIKEYA'S
MESSENGER.



KARTTIKEYA!
THE BOY WHO SLEW
MY BROTHER!





THERE WAS AN UNEASY SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. THEN SIMHAMUKHA SPOKE.

MY INSTINCT TELLS ME THAT THIS KARTTIKEYA IS NO ORDINARY BOY.



REMEMBER
KRAUNCHA...
TARAKA...
WHY DON'T WE
RELEASE...

SIMHAMUKHA!

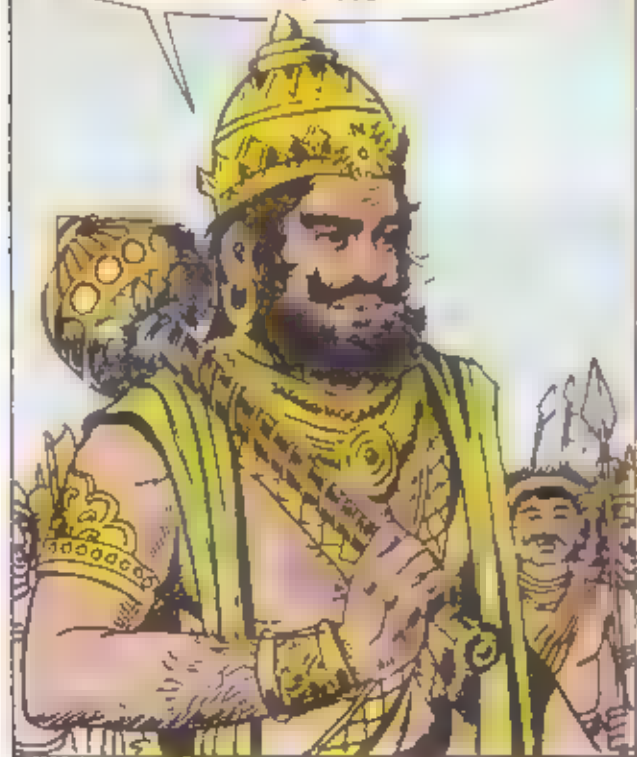


COWARD!
NOT ANOTHER
WORD!

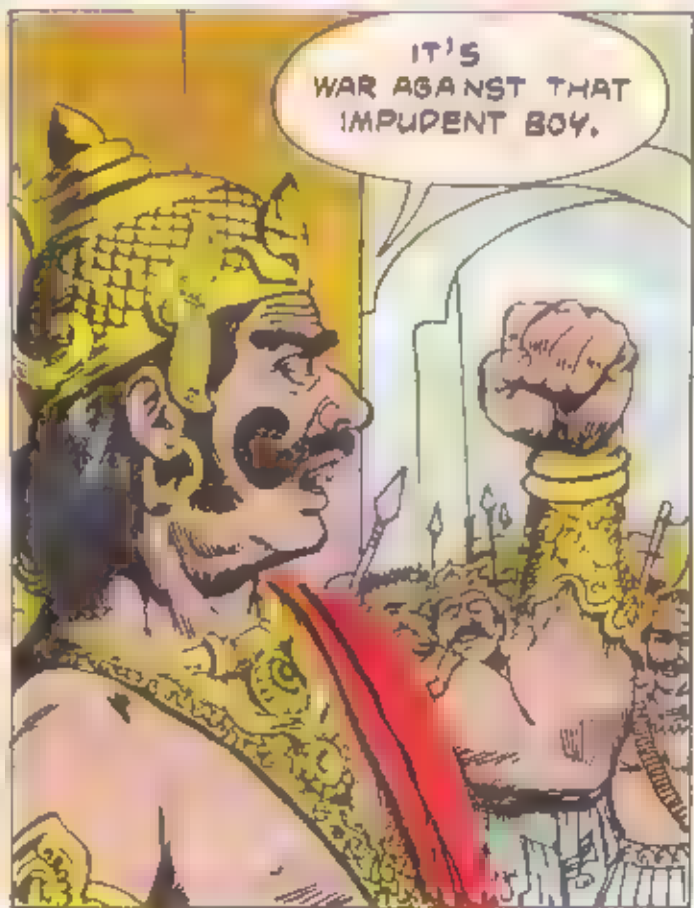
BROTHER, IT IS UNFORTUNATE
THAT WISDOM IS OFTEN
MISTAKEN FOR
COWARDICE.



BY SPEAKING OUT, I HAVE DONE
MY DUTY. NOW IT IS FOR YOU TO
TAKE THE DECISION. I WILL GO
BY IT.



IT'S
WAR AGAINST THAT
IMPUDENT BOY.



MEANWHILE VEERABAHU HAD REACHED KARTTIKEYA'S CAMP.

IT'S NO USE.
SURAPADMAN WANTED
TO CAPTURE ME TOO!

WELL, WE'LL
MEET THEM IN BATTLE.
PREPARE TO MARCH TO
MAHENDRAPURI.

WHEN KARTTIKEYA'S ARMY REACHED
THE OUTSKIRTS OF MAHENDRAPURI,
SURAPADMAN SENT HIS SON
BANUKOPAN TO SUBDUCE THEM.

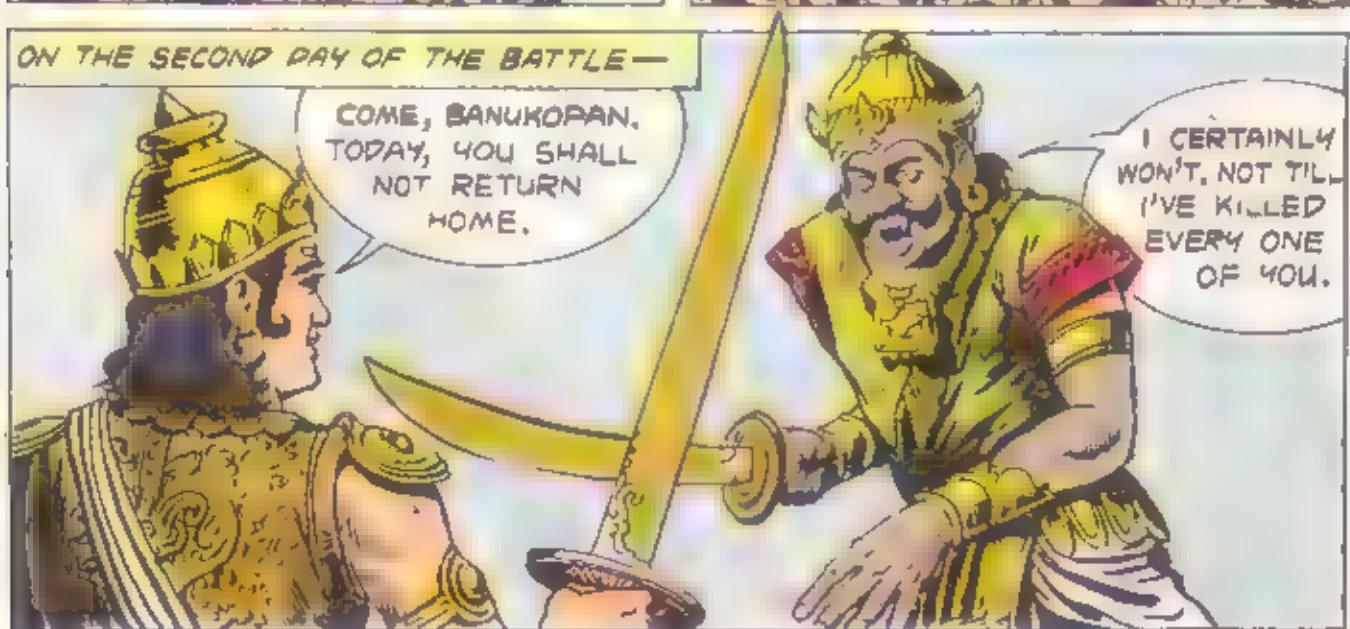
BANUKOPAN FELL UPON THE DEVA ARMY.



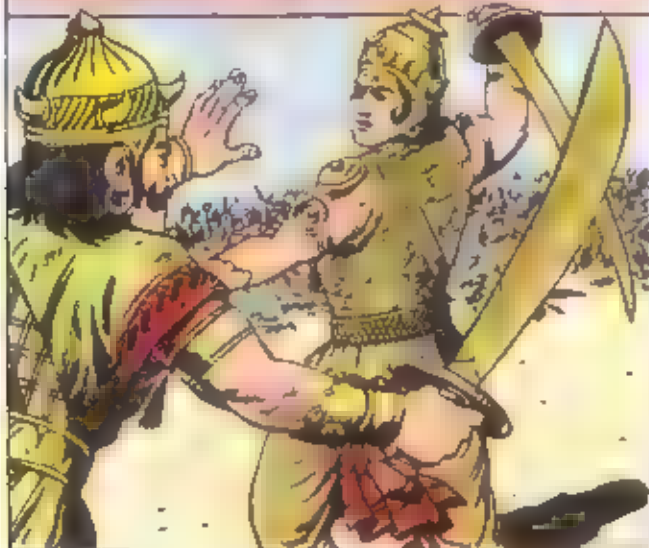
ON THE SECOND DAY OF THE BATTLE—

COME, BANUKOPAN.
TODAY, YOU SHALL
NOT RETURN
HOME.

I CERTAINLY
WON'T, NOT TIL'
I'VE KILLED
EVERY ONE
OF YOU.



VEERABAHU RUSHED AT HIM AND THE TWO FOUGHT LONG AND HARD.



AT LAST BANUKOPAN FELL AND THE ASURAS FLED IN PANIC.



THE DEATH OF BANUKOPAN SHOOK SURAPADMAN.



SAVE US,
SIMHAMUKHA!

I WILL
DO MY BEST,
BROTHER.

SO THE NEXT DAY
SIMHAMUKHA LED
THE ATTACK. THE
ARMY OF THE
DEVAS REELED
UNDER HIS
ONSLAUGHT.



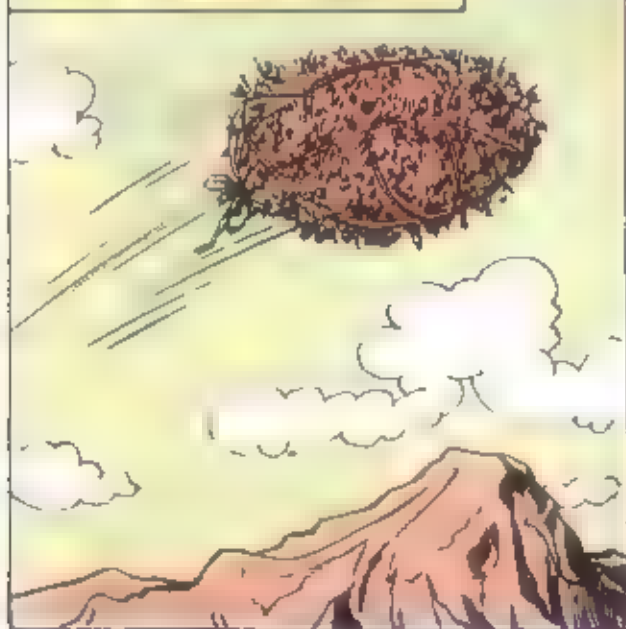
THEN SIMHAMUKHA SENT A MISSILE...



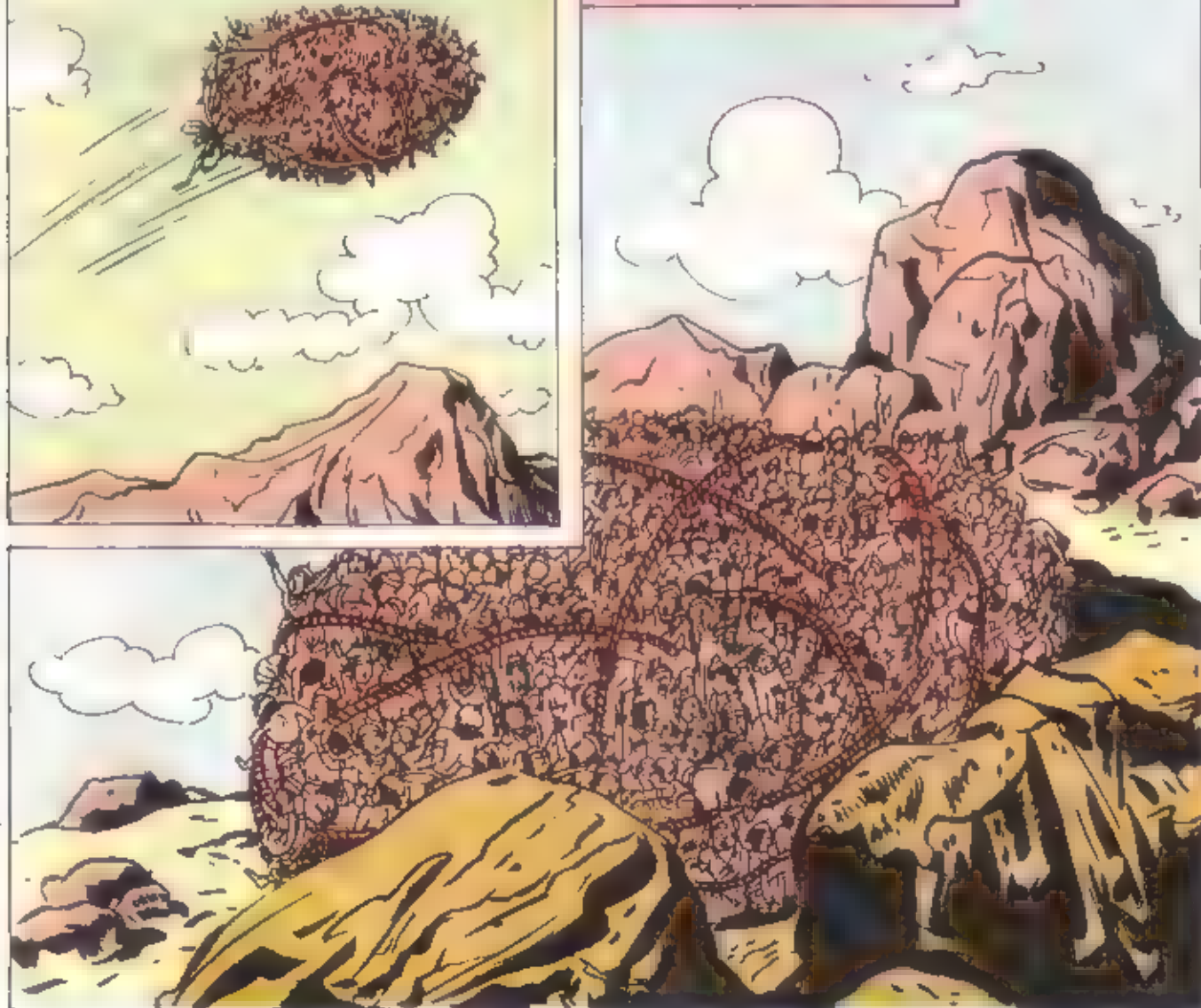
...WHICH WOUND ITSELF AROUND VEERABAHU, HIS BROTHER AND THE REST OF THE ARMY...



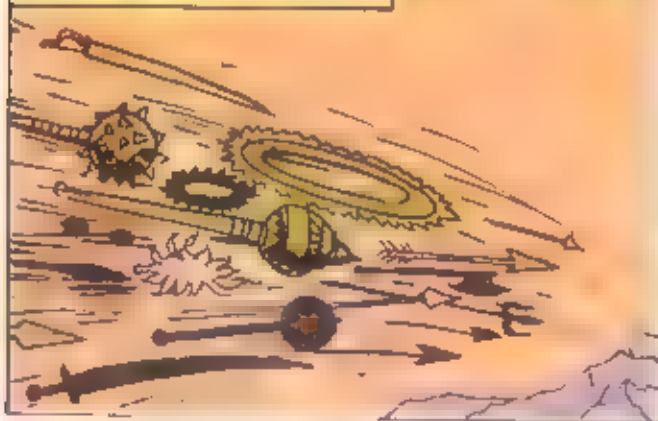
...AND HURLED THEM...



...FAR, FAR AWAY FROM THE BATTLEFIELD.



BUT KARTTIKEYA MEANWHILE HAD SENT FORTH SEVERAL MISSILES TO COUNTER THE MOVE.

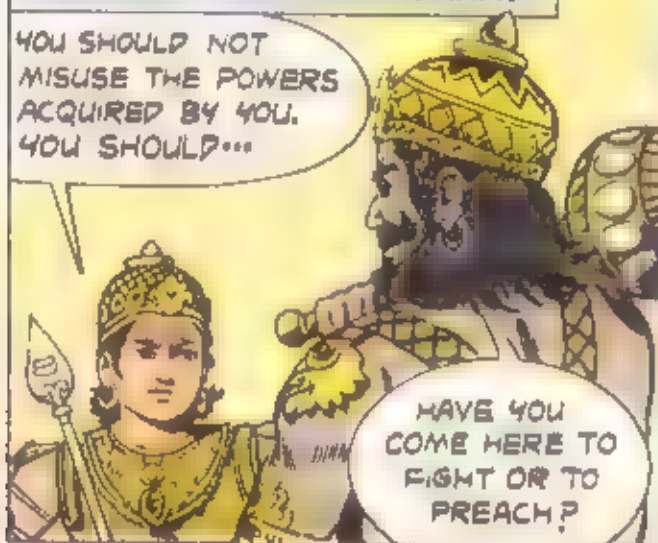


SOON—



THEN KARTTIKEYA TURNED HIS ATTENTION TO SIMHAMUKHA.

YOU SHOULD NOT MISUSE THE POWERS ACQUIRED BY YOU. YOU SHOULD...



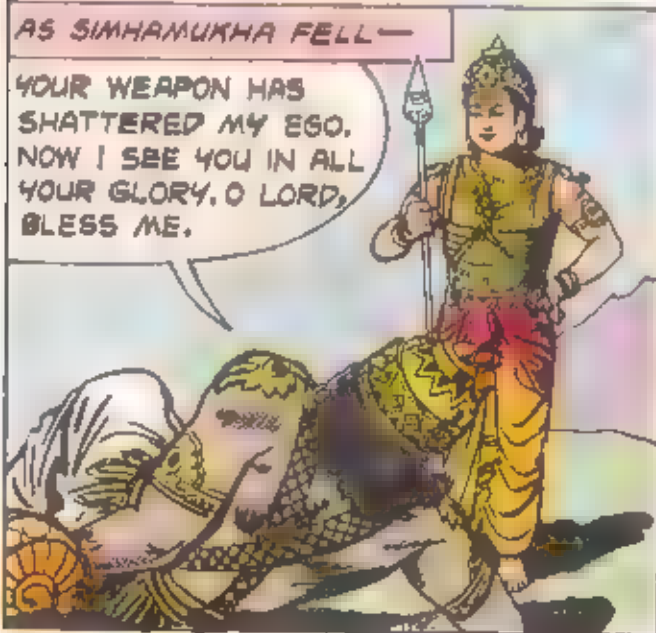
HAVE YOU COME HERE TO FIGHT OR TO PREACH?

AFTER A FIERCE BATTLE KARTTIKEYA HURLED INDRAYUDHA* AT SIMHAMUKHA.



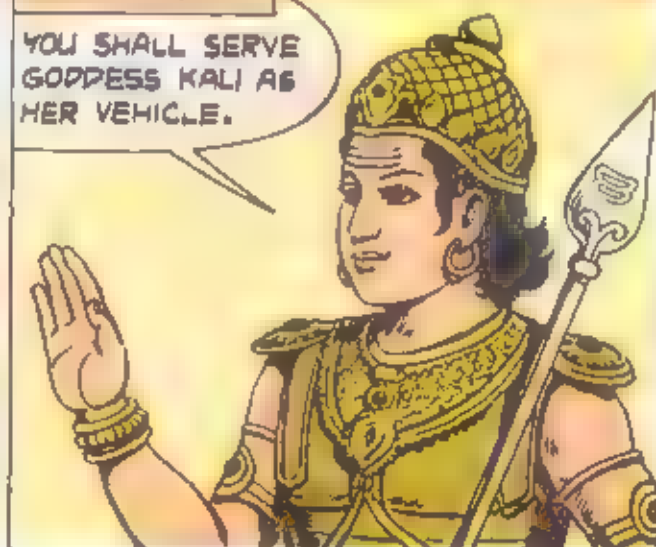
AS SIMHAMUKHA FELL—

YOUR WEAPON HAS SHATTERED MY EGO. NOW I SEE YOU IN ALL YOUR GLORY. O LORD, BLESS ME.



THE MERCIFUL KARTTIKEYA BLESSED SIMHAMUKHA.

YOU SHALL SERVE GODDESS KALI AS HER VEHICLE.



*INDRA'S WEAPON, THE THUNDERBOLT

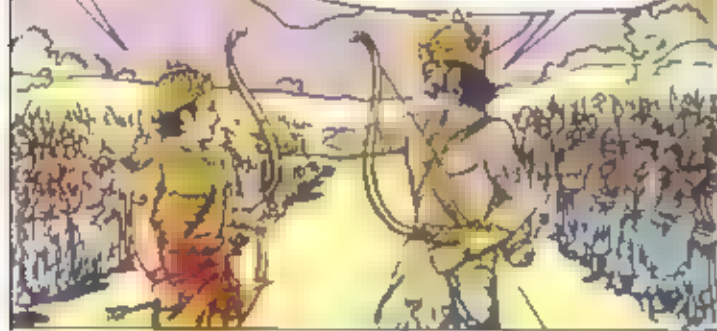
THE NEXT DAY SURAPADMAN HIMSELF LED THE ASURAS TO THE BATTLEFIELD.



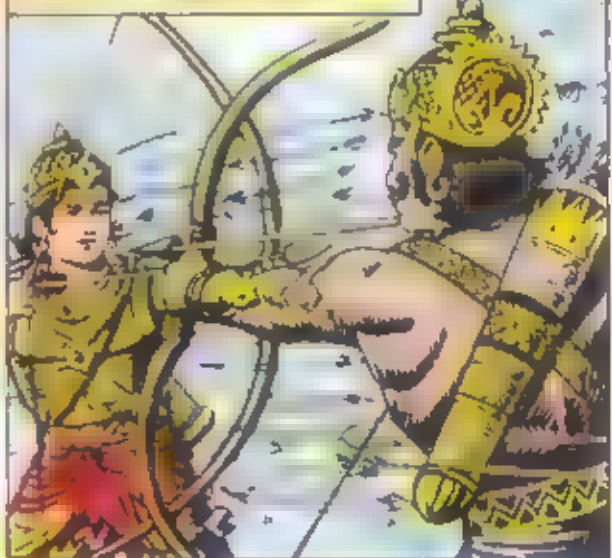
WHEN HE CAME FACE TO FACE WITH
KARTTIKEYA—

MERCY
OR DOOM?
CHOOSE!

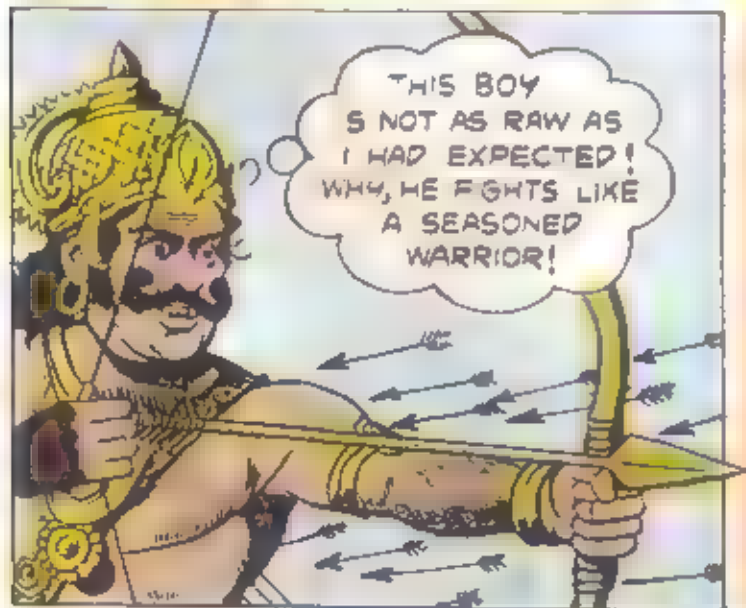
IMPUDENT CHILD! I HAVE
COME TO SILENCE YOU ONCE
AND FOR ALL.



THE TWO FOES MET.



THIS BOY
IS NOT AS RAW AS
I HAD EXPECTED!
WHY, HE FIGHTS LIKE
A SEASONED
WARRIOR!



I'LL HAVE
TO RESORT TO
SORCERY, THAT'S
THE ONLY WAY TO
QUELL HIM!



THE NEXT MOMENT SHOWED ALL THE DEAD ASURAS ON THEIR FEET AND SURAPADMAN UP IN THE SKY IN A CHARIOT.

MY BRAVE ASURAS ARE UP AGAIN, KARTTIKEYA! SAVE YOURSELF NOW!



THIS ASTRA WILL TAKE CARE OF YOUR ASURAS!



AND THIS — OF YOUR CHARIOT!



THE NEXT MOMENT —



SOON —

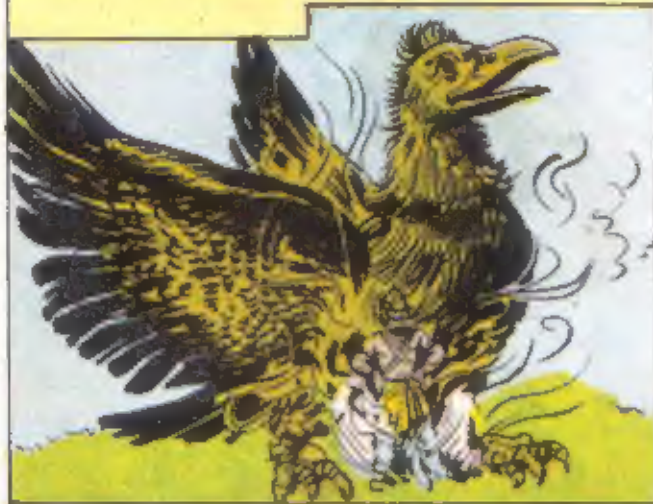
I MUST THANK YOU, SURAPADMAN, FOR PROVIDING ME WITH AN EXCELLENT CHARIOT.



I'LL CHANGE MY FORM AND ATTACK HIM.



SURAPADMAN QUICKLY ASSUMED THE FORM OF A HUGE BIRD ...



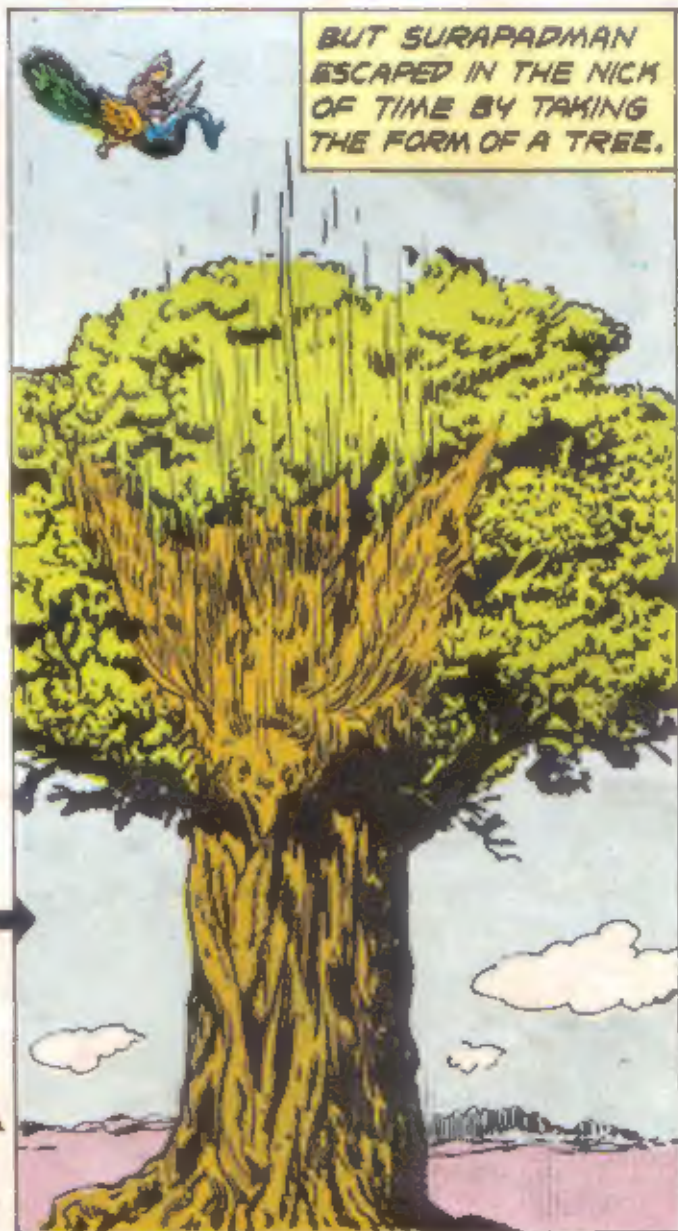
...AND CHARGED AT KARTTIKEYA.



KARTTIKEYA HOWEVER USING INDRA IN THE FORM OF PEACOCK AS HIS MOUNT...



BUT SURAPADMAN ESCAPED IN THE NICK OF TIME BY TAKING THE FORM OF A TREE.



...LASHED OUT AT HIM.



LEARN, O BLIND
ONE! DARKNESS CANNOT
HIDE BEFORE LIGHT!



AS THE SPEAR CUT THE TREE IN TWO,
SURAPADMAN EMERGED UNSCATHED
IN HIS NATURAL FORM.



I'LL
CRUSH HIM
WITH MY
BULK!



SURAPADMAN CHARGED TOWARDS
KARTTIKEYA.



I'LL CRUSH
YOU UNDERFOOT.
AND THAT WILL BE
THE END OF YOU.

QUICK AS LIGHTNING, KARTTIKEYA HURLED HIS
SPEAR AT HIM.



AND —



AS HE FELL, A GREAT CHANGE CAME OVER SURAPADMAN.

LORD, PARDON ME.
I REPENT FOR MY
EVIL ACTS. LORD,
I SEEK REFUGE
IN YOU.



KARTTIKEYA LOOKED AT THE FALLEN
ASURA WITH COMPASSION.



SURAPADMAN,
REPENTANCE WASHES
AWAY ALL ONE'S SINS.
YOU SHALL SERVE ME
AS MY VEHICLE AND
ALSO AS MY
EMBLEM.

THUS SURAPADMAN ASSUMED TWO FORMS — ONE OF A PEACOCK TO SERVE AS
A VEHICLE TO THE LORD AND ANOTHER OF A COCK TO ADORN KARTTIKEYA'S
FLAG POST.



O KARTTIKEYA, WE
BOW TO YOU IN
REVERENCE.

Jeevan and Hanu conclude that Health is Wealth



Whew! Isn't life strange, Jeevan?

Why do you say that?

Look, so far we have learned about great mental achievements and physical feats. I am wondering whether I will ever attain such glory.

Cheer up, Hanu! It is not necessary for you to make the pages of the World Records book right away. Why not just aim to have a sound mind and body to begin with?

If I do, will I get a medal, or a bunch of bananas at least?

Why, you might get something better than that!
For a start you'll have a longer life.

Hey, wait a minute! Hasn't longevity something to do with life insurance?

It certainly does, Hanu. As a matter of fact the science of life insurance is based on the study of the life expectancy of a large group of people.

Well, anyway I'm only a kid. I shouldn't have to bother about life insurance, I suppose.

No, you should. Or I should, as your guardian.

How come?

I have a duty protecting your future. There are many plans of life insurance like the **Children's Anticipated Policy**, the **Children's Deferred Assurance Policy**, the **Educational Annuity Policy**, the **Marriage Endowment Policy**, etc. All parents and guardians should know about these policies.

How can they do that?

By asking the **L.I.C.** agent about these plans and how they work.

Then take me to see an **L.I.C.** agent now!



Life Insurance Corporation of India